

REMARKS

The Office Action dated May 16, 2007 has been received and carefully studied.

Claim 8 has been cancelled without prejudice.

The Examiner objects to the drawings as not being "clear copies". The drawings are those filed in the PCT application and were not objected to. Submitted herewith are Replacement Drawings which are believed to be clear copies.

The Examiner objects to claim 4 because "each of said apertures" lacks proper antecedent basis.

The objection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 4 expressly recites that the receiver comprises an aperture, and that the hitch member comprises an aperture. Accordingly, it is clear that more than one aperture is recited, and thus "each of said apertures" has proper antecedent basis in the claim.

The Examiner objects to claim 6 because UTV should be rewritten as utility task vehicle. By the accompanying amendment, claim 6 has been so amended.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Standfuss, U.S. Patent No. 3,410,008. The Examiner states that Standfuss discloses a hitch mount assembly for a vehicle, including a hitch member

adapted to be received by a receiver, and a locking mechanism, the member having an arc-shaped free end, and the locking mechanism including over-center latches.

By the accompanying amendment, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the arc-shape of the hitch member is in the horizontal cross-sectional direction. Support for the amendment can be found in Figures 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10, for example.

Although plate 7 of Standfuss does appear to have an arc-shaped end, the arc-shape is vertical, not horizontal as in the present invention as now claimed. As a result, the hitch member of Standfuss is not self-aligning. In contrast, the arc-shape in a horizontal cross-sectional direction allows the free end to be received in the receiver and self-align. This is nowhere disclosed or suggested by Standfuss.

Regarding claims 2 and 3 and their recitation of an over-center latch, Applicant respectfully submits the Examiner's characterization of the latch 38 of Standfuss as an "over-center latch" is incorrect. The term "over-center latch" is a term of art, as over-center latches are a known type of latch that functions in a known way that is different from the latch 38 of Standfuss. Suitable over-center latches are discussed in detail on pages 11-12 of the

PCT specification. The Examiner is invited to search the term using the GOOGLE search engine to confirm the foregoing.

The Examiner also rejects claims 1, 4 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Cox, U.S. Patent No. 3,986,727. The Examiner states that Cox discloses a hitch mounting assembly including a frame supporting a working implement, a hitch member having an arc-shaped free end pivotable about a pivot axis, and a locking mechanism.

By the accompanying amendment, claim 1 has been amended to make it clear that the hitch member is shaped to self-align in the receiver. Support for the amendment can be found on page 4 of the PCT application, for example.

The hitch of Cox is in no way self-aligning. The circular plate 18 is received between two circular plates 15, but the space between the two plates 15 is open, thus preventing self-alignment of the plate 18 therein.

The Examiner rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Standfuss or Cox.

Claim 7 is believed to be allowable by virtue of its dependence.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing.

Respectfully submitted,


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Amendments to the Drawings

The attached sheets of replacement drawings are clear versions of Figures 1-11. No changes have been made.